



Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries

Remarks by the Hon. Audley Shaw, CD, MP

Minister of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries

Signing of an MOU with CARDI for Refurbishing the

Seed Storage Facility

Bodles Research Station

MICAF, 4 St. Lucia Avenue, Kingston 5

Wednesday, April 25, 2018 4:00 p.m.

Salutations:

- Permanent Secretary of MICAF, Donovan Stanberry
- Executive Director, CARDI, Barton Clarke
- Other Specially Invited Guests
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

1. I am very pleased today to welcome the team from CARDI, led by Executive Director, Barton Clarke and Dr Gregory Robins, the representative here in Jamaica.

I am aware that CARDI has had many years of meaningful and collaborative work with Jamaica and, specifically, with the Ministry of Agriculture and I regard our interaction today as a further deepening of the partnership we share in promoting agricultural research and development.

2. As we seek to work together to further develop and expand the agricultural sector, not just here, but throughout the region, we are all acutely aware of the importance of the role of Research and Development in advancing the sector.

The success of our strategies in growing the sector will largely depend on the application of the best available scientific information based on research and development initiatives, especially in the context of climate change and our obligation to ensuring resilience in agriculture.

We have to constantly monitor, assess and evaluate the sector in a bid to mitigate its vulnerability and enhance its sustainability.

3. Some important steps are being undertaken, in that regard, and I am happy to note that CARDI is involved in the implementation of several applied adaptation initiatives under the Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR), with grant funding of US \$10.39 Million from the IDB.
4. I am further pleased to note that one of the outputs of this programme is the expansion and establishment of seed storage facilities at the Bodles Research Station in St Catherine to house the seeds of climate resilient crop varieties for the region.
5. This is a very timely intervention and comes against the background of the Redevelopment Programme now under way at Bodles, which is home of our Research and Development Division in the Ministry.
6. Under the Bodles Re-development Programme
 - We have engaged in collaboration with the Jamaica Dairy Development Board for the rehabilitation of the forage systems and pastures to improve nutrition and

productivity of the animals at the Bodles Station. We have also completed phase one of the renovations to the existing dairy parlour under the project.

- This year we have an allocation of \$300 million, which will expand and upgrade the infrastructure at Bodles. We will be improving the security, road network, farm buildings, water supply and irrigation systems as well as our greenhouses, seed and post-harvest facilities.
- We are also aiming to restructure the entire Research and Development Division to attract and retain highly skilled personnel to the research and innovation agenda, particularly in the area of sustainable agriculture with emphasis on the development, production and utilization of diverse genetic material, with climate resilient traits; to strengthen our response and recovery to shocks in the environment such as drought, temperature increase and plant and animal diseases.
- We intend to return Bodles to its pride of place and a centre of excellence in agricultural research in the Caribbean!

7. Our Research and Development Division, especially through our Bodles Research Station, must be integrally involved in the development and provision of clean planting material for crops.

Through the Clean Seed Development Programme, we have made some strides with the production of clean seeds for both Irish and sweet potato using biotechnology. The seed programme also currently produces Scotch Bonnet pepper, pumpkin, corn and sorrel seeds which are sold to our farmers.

8. There is, however, need for further expansion. Therefore, building on those achievements, our proposal is to strengthen the capacity at the Bodles Station and to embark on a comprehensive redevelopment programme at this station so that the R&D arm of the Ministry can be revitalised to better serve the needs of the agricultural sector.
9. We are on a mission to significantly boost agricultural production in Jamaica. We have thousands of acres of idle lands and thousands of idle hands.

We have every intention of matching those hands with lands improve growth through production.

This growth thrust is also going to require more seeds and more seedlings so farmers can have what they need to expand their production and productivity. We expect that the R&D Division, through its seed production and storage programme, will deliver these.

10. The seed storage facility is also of significant worth, especially when placed in the context of the Ministry's **National Seed Policy**.

This recently developed Seed Policy is now a white paper and is to be submitted to Cabinet for review.

The goal of the policy is "to establish a sustainable seed system that ensures a consistent and reliable supply of clean, affordable and accessible seed in support of agricultural production, productivity, food security and biodiversity."

The objectives of the policy are to:

- i) Facilitate development, evaluation and maintenance of pest resistant, high yielding varieties that are adaptive to given local agro-ecological zones and challenges posed by climate change.

- ii) Increase availability and access to clean seed to meet production requirements.
- iii) Improve regulation and monitoring of the seed industry to ensure adherence to quality standards.
- iv) Improve the sustainable marketing and distribution of seeds **AND**
- v) Protect national plant genetic resources.

11. The support we graciously receive today will help us to achieve some of these objectives and, ultimately, will aid us on our mission to grow and expand the agricultural sector in Jamaica.

12. And so, it is my pleasure, to sign this MOU with CARDI on behalf of the Research team at Bodles and the Ministry, an agreement that will go a far way towards boosting the seed producing capacity at the Bodles Research Station.

Thank you!